

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

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39. (currently amended) In a solid shaped compressed article ~~manufactured by compression or compaction~~, said solid shaped compressed article containing a biologically active ingredient and a hydrocarbon wax or natural wax, the improvement wherein :

- 10 - said solid shaped compressed article contains the biologically active ingredient in the form of ~~coated~~ biologically active ingredient-loaded beads with a brittle coating,
- 15 - ~~and wherein~~ said solid shaped article further comprises biologically inactive cushioning beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm for protecting said brittle coating during compression or compaction, wherein said biologically inactive cushioning beads comprise at least one compressible cushioning component consisting essentially of a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, and ~~wherein said cushioning beads optionally include~~ up to 70% by weight of another
- 20 biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and
- wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30 : 70 and 70 : 30 .

25 40. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the biologically active ingredient-loaded beads are coated with a coating material for controlling or sustaining the release properties of the biologically active ingredient or for taste masking or for imparting resistance to gastric fluid.

30 41. (canceled)

42. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the cushioning beads include at least 5% by weight of at least a biologically inactive pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

43. (original) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein over 98% of the molecules of the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax have a molecular chain length ranging from 20 to 75 carbon atoms.

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44. (currently amended) A method for treating a plant in need of a biological treatment or a mammal in need of a medication by bringing the said plant into contact with an efficient amount of a biologically active ingredient or by administering to said mammal an efficient amount of said medication containing a biologically active ingredient, wherein the said biologically active ingredient is in the form of a compressed solid shaped article containing ~~coated~~ biologically active ingredient-loaded beads coated with a brittle coating, and further comprising biologically inactive cushioning beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm protecting said brittle coating during compression, wherein said biologically inactive cushioning beads comprise at least one compressible cushioning component consisting essentially of a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, ~~wherein said cushioning beads~~ and optionally ~~include~~ up to 70% by weight of another biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30 : 70 and 70 : 30 .

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45. (canceled)

46. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the cushioning beads include at least 5% by weight of at least a biologically inactive pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

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47. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax has a dynamic viscosity at 98.9°C (DIN 52007) greater than or equal to 2 mPa.s and/or a congealing point between 50°C and 90°C.

48. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax comprises a mixture of 30 to 90% by weight of linear hydrocarbons and 10 to 70% by weight of branched hydrocarbons.

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49. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the distribution of molecular chain lengths within the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax is such that less than 6% of the molecules have less than 25 carbon atoms, 6 to 50% of the molecules have 25 to 29 carbon atoms, 20 to 45% of the molecules have 30 to 34 carbon atoms and 7 to 70% of the molecules have at least 35 carbon atoms.

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50. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax is a product of catalytic polymerization of ethylene or copolymerization of ethylene with minor amounts of linear alpha-olefins having from 3 to 12 carbon atoms or maleic anhydride.

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51. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the natural wax is selected from carnauba wax, candelilla wax, palm wax, lignite wax, ozokerite, lardaceine, ceresine wax and China wax.

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52. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the wax comprises compounds selected from saturated hydrocarbons having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated alcohols having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated monocarboxylic acids having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, esters obtained from the said alcohols and monocarboxylic acids and having from 50 to 62 carbon atoms, and their mixtures.

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53. (previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the cushioning beads have an average particle size of 0.5 to 2.0 mm.

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54. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax has a dynamic viscosity at 98.9°C (DIN 52007)

greater than or equal to 2 mPa.s and/or a congealing point between 50°C and 90°C.

55. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax comprises a mixture of 30 to 90% by weight of linear hydrocarbons and 10 to 70% by weight of branched hydrocarbons.
56. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the distribution of molecular chain lengths within the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax is such that less than 6% of the molecules have less than 25 carbon atoms, 6 to 50% of the molecules have 25 to 29 carbon atoms, 20 to 45% of the molecules have 30 to 34 carbon atoms and 7 to 70% of the molecules have at least 35 carbon atoms.
57. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax is a product of catalytic polymerization of ethylene or copolymerization of ethylene with minor amounts of linear alpha-olefins having from 3 to 12 carbon atoms or maleic anhydride.
58. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the natural wax is selected from carnauba wax, candelilla wax, palm wax, lignite wax, ozokerite, lardaceine, ceresine wax and China wax.
59. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the wax comprises compounds selected from saturated hydrocarbons having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated alcohols having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated monocarboxylic acids having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, esters obtained from the said alcohols and monocarboxylic acids and having from 50 to 62 carbon atoms, and their mixtures.
60. (previously presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein over 98% of the molecules of the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax have a molecular chain length ranging from 20 to 75 carbon atoms.

61. (new) In an article containing a biologically active ingredient and a hydrocarbon wax or natural wax, the improvement wherein:

- said article contains the biologically active ingredient in the form of biologically active ingredient-loaded beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm with a brittle coating,
- 5 - said article further comprises biologically inactive cushioning beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm with at least one compressible cushioning component comprising a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, and up to 70% by weight of another biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and
- 10 - wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30 : 70 and 70 : 30.

62. (new) A method for treating a plant in need of a biological treatment or a mammal in need of a medication by bringing the said plant into contact with an efficient amount of a biologically active ingredient or by administering to said mammal an efficient amount of said medication containing a biologically active ingredient, including

- providing the biologically active ingredient in the form of biologically active ingredient-loaded beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm with a brittle coating,
- 20 - providing biologically inactive cushioning beads of a size of about .5 to 2 mm with at least one compressible cushioning component comprising a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, and up to 70% by weight of another biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and 70 : 30,
- 25 - compressing beads wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30 : 70 and 70 : 30 to form a solid shaped compressed article, and
- bringing the solid shaped compressed article into contact with said plant or mammal.
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63. (new) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the biologically active ingredient-loaded beads are formed by extrusion-spheronization.

64. (new) A solid shaped article according to claim 44, wherein the biologically active ingredient-loaded beads are made by extrusion-spheronization.
65. (new) A solid shaped article according to claim 61, wherein the biologically active
5 ingredient-loaded beads are formed by extrusion-spheronization.
66. (new) A solid shaped article according to claim 62, wherein the biologically active ingredient-loaded beads are made by extrusion-spheronization.